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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002328

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA, DRL - KAREN GILBRIDE, DS/IP/AF,  
DS/TIA/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [ASEC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN PLATEAU STATE

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b  
& d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Violence erupted in Plateau State on November 27 and 28 following the long awaited Local Government Area (LGA) elections. Riots broke out resulting in numerous homes, businesses, and churches being torched and mob violence caused several deaths. Reports allege that the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) was attempting to manipulate the results in the Jos North Local Government Area (LGA) in its favor, fueling tension between the PDP and the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). The political divide also falls along ethnic and religious lines, as the majority of people living in the ANPP-dominated North LGA are Muslim Hausa-Fulani, while the surrounding areas are populated by indigenous Christian tribes that tend to be PDP members. Since the March elections were canceled due to alleged violence, it is quite possible that PDP members provoked violence upon learning that the ANPP candidate was leading in the vote count. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) REPORTS OF VIOLENCE: Post received reports of ongoing violence and civil unrest in Plateau State throughout the day on November 28. One member of the Mission's Locally Employed Staff (LES) reported the death of two family members in Jos, both at the hands of the Nigeria Police Force. It was unclear if the deaths were accidental or due to extrajudicial force. Another LES was in close contact with family members who witnessed a crowd of rioters enter the University of Jos campus. A few hours later, the family witnessed members of the Nigerian Military deployed on campus to keep peace. (Post confirmed Chief of Defense Staff authorization for military support to police efforts under the Military Assistance to Civil Powers program.) Other Mission contacts in Jos reported the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN), the largest church in Plateau State, and a mosque in the Tundun Wada area of Jos were burned to the ground. Titus Mann (protect), a civil society activist, said he could see a thick layer of smoke in the direction of Jos from his house three kilometers outside of town. Post received several reports of homes and businesses being torched. The violence was serious enough to restrict movement, children were not allowed to go to school and people were told to stay in their homes. Kingsley Bangwell (protect), Executive Director of Youngstars, a democracy NGO for youths, said that he could see protesting from his office. Most of the violence was centered in the Jos North LGA.

13. (C) BACKGROUND: The Plateau State LGA elections were originally scheduled for March, but canceled midway through due to alleged violence. Contacts report that during the vote count for the November 27 election, the ANPP candidate (a Hausa-Fulani) appeared to be leading, in response to which the PDP sought to "manipulate" the vote in favor of the PDP candidate (a native Berom, one of the indigenous tribes of the state). Although Hausa-Fulani began moving into the area in the early 20th century and have, since that time, formed the majority in Jos town, they are still considered "settlers" by the "indigenes" (ethnic groups identified under Nigerian law as the original inhabitants) of Plateau State. The indigenes, however, control the state government and have blocked every attempt to accord the Hausa-Fulani "indigenous" status, which has limited their access to power at the state level. When the elections were postponed in March, the PDP-controlled state government elected a committee - made up of indigene PDP supporters - to oversee electoral operations in the Jos North LGA.

14. (C) COMMENT: It is very possible that those opposed to a Hausa-Fulani member of the ANPP being elected into local government would incite violence in order to have the elections once again postponed. It is also possible that the violence was incited by ANPP members in response to reported PDP vote manipulation. Although the violence was the result of a political power struggle, it goes much deeper and reflects the ethno-religious tension which has existed in Jos for generations. Post will continue to monitor the situation. END COMMENT.

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